GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1949
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2000
CONFERENCE OF HIV/AIDS
RAJIV PRATAP RUDY

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether on-going programme of HIV/AIDS is being challenged on scientific forum;

(b) whether any Conference was recently held in Nagpur to ascertain validity of HIV/AIDS programmes and methods of testing; (

(c) if not, the details of participants including international experts from foreign countries; and

(d) the agenda discussed and the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM)

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) & (d) An International Conference on validity of HIV/AIDS programme including methods of testing was held in Nagpur on 30-31st January, 2000. About 50 persons participated in this conference. The agenda that was discussed was on the validity of HIV strain prevalent in India and different parts of the World; the methods of diagnosis of HIV infection and HIV infection as the cause of AIDSIn this conference no recommendations were made and no formal documents signed. Dr. D.A. Gadkari of National Institute of Virology, Pune attended. The report of Dr. Gadkari is annexed.

Annexure

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

No.513(01)/1-6826 Dated 25th February, 2000

Dr. Lalit Kant,
Sr. DDG & Chief Division of ECD,
Indian Council of Medical Research,
Ansari Nagar, Post Box No. 4911
NEW DELHI-110029

Subject:- Report on the `International Conference of Validity of HIV/AIDS Programme Including Methods of Testing` held at Nagpur on 30-31 January, 1999.

Dear Dr. Knat,

This has reference to your request to submit a report on the above mentioned conference.

I attended the meeting on instructions from the Council. I had submitted an Abstract on the HIV subtyping work that we had done at NARI, Pune and presented the data. Please find enclosed herewith the Inaugural and Scientific Programme of the meetingUnder separate cover, I am also sending you the Abstract book for your perusal. About 50 people, including the speakers attended the

meeting . The WHO was represented by Dr. Shashi Kant from the WHO Cjountry Office, New Delhi.There were no formal recommendations of the meeting made or signed. The Organizer requested me to Inaugurate the Conference (since the Health Minister, Maharashtra State could not attend the meeting). I politely declined this invitation. At the end of the Inaugural session, the surprise announcement was that an Exhibition will be inaugurated at my hands. I did that to find out that the exhibition was news paper cuttings, other reports which criticized the ongoing scientific work on HIV/AIDS.

The argument of Dr. Harven was that HIV has not been isolated and electron micrograph photographs were not available.My reply was that there are hundreds of HIV isolates available through out the world and NARI has also isolated about 70 HIV strains.Several EM photographs are available in scientific literature including our work which was published in IJMR.Dr. roberto Giraldo`s argument was that there are about 70 diseases listed in literature which give false positive results. These, to my mind were isolated reports when the kits were in improvement stage. It was also clearly argued by me that presently available HIV diagnostic kits have high degree of sensitivity and specificity and to our experience such false positive results do not occur any significant level. It was also argued by Dr. Giraldo that when the serum samples were tested in undiluted form each and every sample gives positive results in ELISA test.It was argued by me that manufacturer`s protocol on serum dilutions must be adhered to and using undiluted serum is violation of standard protocol recommended by the manufacturer. This argument holds true for most diagnostic tests. The major argument was that it has not been shown that HIV causes AIDS.Dr. Shashi Kant argued in several ways that there is sufficient information in literature that HIV is a causative agent for AIDS and also referred to abstract submitted by you. A couple of studies were presented that HIV sero-positive patients suffering with severe diarrhea and other diseases were cured by Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and nutrition supplement treatment. However, there were no controls, no inclusion creiteria, no standared treatment and outcome indicators. Only conclusion was that these patients who were morbid were able to walk around and are living physically normal life, post treatment. No other tests were performed.

The last session of the meeting was the Panel Discussion.The participants were three foreigners, Dr. Shantilal Kothari (Organizer), Dr. Shahi Kant, myself and an Advocate. The session was Chaired and conducted by Dr. Manu Kothari from Mumbai.

The major arguments were that the HIV testing was unnecessary, faulty, poisonous compounds like AZT should not be recommended for intervention of mother to child transmission of HIV. Myself and Dr. Shashi Kant did not agree to these arguments.Majority of the people had biased opinion, were not scientifically sound and did not know much about National and International scientific status of HIV research. As mentioned earlier, no recommendations were made and no formal documents were signed.

With regards,

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-
(D.A.Gadkari)
DIRECTOR